

# Tauranga Intermediate School adopts Chromebooks

Streamline students' journey to secondary school and beyond

## About Tauranga Intermediate School

[Tauranga Intermediate School](#) is the second-largest intermediate school in New Zealand, with over 1,200 students. The school draws from a demographically and ethnically diverse population spread across rural and urban areas. In addition to preparing students for their next level of schooling and beyond, Tauranga Intermediate is also dedicated to carrying out its vision statement, “Exploring Personal Potential.”



## Evolving to keep pace with the world

Tauranga Intermediate’s commitment to preparing students for the future extends to the school’s use of technology. Tauranga Intermediate originally had computer labs, then moved the computers into classrooms for sharing by students.

In 2017, the school moved to a one-to-one deployment of tablets. However, looking to provide students with devices with a traditional keyboard—as well as devices that would seamlessly accompany students to secondary school—school leaders replaced most tablets with about 1,300 [Chromebooks](#) for Tauranga’s next generation of one-to-one devices.

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“From the beginning, our goals with technology were to move our students away from simply consuming information, and toward **enabling them to create**. Of course, we want to prepare students for a life as digital citizens and teach them not just how the tools work, but also **how to be smart about content, about their identities, and about staying safe.**”

**Adam Roach,**  
Deputy Principal, Tauranga Intermediate.



Going to one-to-one device deployment was a big step forward for equity at the school. “The core purpose of a one-to-one program is to increase accessibility for every student, regardless of background,” Roach says. Parents of every student at Tauranga can now buy a Chromebook for their children to use at school or take home; parents can also pay for the Chromebooks over time.

### **An updated form factor creates improved student focus**

Before Chromebooks came to Tauranga classrooms, Tauranga teachers and administrators noticed some emerging issues that using a laptop device might solve. Secondary schools in the Tauranga area were primarily equipping students with Chromebooks since the students have to do much more writing.

“Our students were faced with not only having to acquire a new device for secondary school, but also acquiring new skill sets for keyboard use,” Roach says.

Leaders such as Roach also observed some flexibility challenges with tablets in terms of lesson planning. When students needed to type, the tablet’s screen was largely taken up by the virtual keyboard, making it difficult to use a split screen for lessons.

Administrators and technology support staff realised that a laptop would provide a larger screen and a better view for students.

Another challenge was the tablet’s built-in camera, which was a distraction for students. “We’re talking about 10-year-olds to 13-year-olds,” explains Dale Leggett, ICT Support at Tauranga. “The students couldn’t resist using the cameras, which was a distraction. This was probably the biggest problem I heard about from teachers.”

“Some of our student families would not normally be able to afford a laptop,” Roach says. “Paying a few dollars a month so their child will have a device all the way through secondary school has made a huge difference to these families. It’s a good service for the community.”

### **More focused learning with Chromebooks**

Tauranga Intermediate students began using managed Chromebooks across every classroom in early 2023.

“We found that the form factor of a laptop has been much more conducive to studying,” says Roach. “It’s meant to be used sitting at a table, whereas a tablet is meant to be taken on the go and used anywhere, which for these students, is often a place full of distractions. A laptop really does force students to focus in a different way, because of the size of the screen, the keyboard, and how it’s actually designed to be used.”

For Tauranga’s teaching and technology leaders, going with a laptop form factor wasn’t just a matter of giving the students a device they could take on to secondary school. “We felt it was necessary to prepare our students for what they will encounter when they are adults, to give them the universal skills,” says Roach.

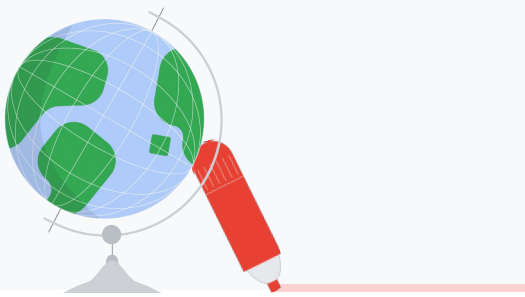
“Like keyboarding, for example,” says Leggett. “I’ve always been a big believer that kids should learn typing as early as possible, and in reality that means typing on a regular keyboard.”



## Creating instant policies school-wide

“We knew we wanted a traditional clamshell laptop because wear and damage would be an issue with hybrid devices,” says Roach. “We wanted what was best for the students and what would help us be more equitable, so cost was a factor.”

Chromebooks offered the price range and form factors needed at Tauranga Intermediate, but there were other benefits. The school enabled [Chrome Education Upgrade](#) for device management and enjoyed the time saving and security benefits found within the web-based admin console.



## Easy integration with lessons

The ChromeOS platform also improves the usability of [Google Classroom](#). “Teachers have been using Classroom a lot more than we used to,” Leggett says. That’s a good thing, Leggett adds, because the combination of Classroom and ChromeOS provides a simpler interface, with easier navigation and shortcuts. In addition, students with reading or writing challenges can also find helpful accessibility tools within ChromeOS, including a screen reader and live captions.

Once we understood the many policy options in Chrome Education Upgrade, our **day-to-day management of the devices was much easier**. Today, most of the management is about kids bringing me a few devices to troubleshoot.”

**Dale Leggett,**  
ICT Support at Tauranga



One of those policies, explains Leggett, was using the Admin console to turn off all Chromebooks cameras as the default setting. “That was so easy,” Leggett says. “We love the instantness of the policies. And if a teacher wants the cameras back, we can do that in a few seconds.”

Roach and Leggett hope to find many more ways to enhance lessons with Chromebooks in the near future. “We’re growing our digital technologies with additional specialists, and looking at STEM programs and how we’re going to integrate Chromebooks into our other specialist subjects,” Roach says. “We can envision bringing digital tools into many more subjects.”

